

AM2/THOMAS CONFIRMATION HEARING

THE DAILY SUN • Friday, September 26, 1991

Biden, abortion-rights backers square off over Thomas remarks

By BOB DART
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Democratic chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee challenged abortion rights supporters yesterday when they before Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas would vote to change his position on abortion if he became a Supreme Court justice.

Liberal urges rejection of Thomas

By BOB DART
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Rep. John Lewis told the Senate Judiciary Committee on Thursday that he would vote to reject Justice Clarence Thomas if he became a Supreme Court justice.

Joining other Democratic members of the House, the Black Caucus is opposing Thomas's elevation to the Supreme Court because he is from Georgia and the conservative black Republicans from his state is not an advocate for young African Americans.

"I think we want someone who is going to be a role model for our children," said Rep. John Lewis, adding that he wants "a role model I want for my son."

A veteran of the bloody civil rights marches through the South, Lewis argued that Thomas benefited from affirmative action in his law school at Yale. He also now wants to see such help to other black Americans, including those who nominate who wants to destroy the bridge that brought him over troubled waters, said Lewis, who was the first to climb the ladder that he climbed up.

Just because Thomas rose from poverty to negotiate a compromise to be nominated to the Supreme Court does not mean he should be confirmed, said Lewis.

"I am the son of sharecroppers. I grew up in a one-room house with a mother and a father, six brothers and three sisters. We were very poor," said Lewis. "I am not sure that anyone qualified to sit on the highest court of the land."

If you want to vote to confirm Clarence Thomas, "tell the senators that you are voting for something other than the fact that he grew up poor in Paa Gun," said Lewis.

The Black Caucus' testimony reflected the views of 25 of the 27 Black members of Congress, all of whom supported the confirmation of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

Abortion rights leaders warns against Thomas

Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON — Karen Michel, former director of the Abortion Rights Action League, detailed her personal experience with Justice Thomas while testifying at the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings.

Michele told the Senate Judiciary committee that Judge Thomas would vote to overturn Roe v. Wade, the fundamental right — to take this nation back to the days when women had to go to back-alley abortionists for help, but the back alleys for health care.

Every woman's testimony: "I was raised Catholic, married young, and as a young woman I had three abortions in the first three live years. But in 1976, my husband suddenly announced that he was leaving me and I was pregnant."

"I was devastated. Without money or any place to go, I was unable to get a charge account at the local five-and-dime."

"About immediately after my husband left me, I learned that I was pregnant again."

"I was forced to appear before a hospital-appointed panel of four — three of whom were strait-laced, cross-examining me about the most intimate and personal details of my life. In the end, I was denied ... yet I had to win their permission."

"I was admitted to the hospital. Yet as I awaited the procedure, I was so afraid that I was not able to have the abortion without writing personal notes to the doctor that had just deserted me and my children."

"At all times ... I carried with me the phone number of a Planned Parenthood clinic, which I had to break the law and risk my life because my survival depended on it."

"I do try to return to confirm Justice Thomas."

During a 1987 speech Thomas gave that praised an anti-abortion group:

Ridder made the comment during the representative's speech to the pro-abortion-rights group. Thomas had voted to reject Thomas's nomination to be an associate justice of the Supreme Court.

"The record shows that, if confirmed, Judge Thomas would indeed vote to take away this fundamental right," Ridder said. "He has gone back to the days when women had to go to back-alley abortionists for health care," said Kate Mullaney, director of the National Abortion Federation.

But Biden disagreed, saying: "I don't know where in the record on that issue Justice Thomas has extreme views."

Thomas testified that his praise of the organization was a "throwaway line" intended to support his position on the issue of abortion rights. He endorsed its conclusion on the issue of abortion rights.

Biden rebuked Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., for saying that a subject was "the attendance of a [FBI] agent." Spokesperson church activists said they did not believe that the FBI agent was there.

"I think that's absolutely, totally

completely irrelevant as a matter of principle, and I also think that it is irrelevant as a matter of fact," Biden said. "I think he has been misinformed. There are three Roman Catholics on the panel who support abortion rights."

Biden added: "This was the first indication that he did not agree with the position of the organization that he was testifying for."

He probably is the only member of the Senate to have made that claim," Biden said.

The credibility of Thomas' insis-